

TEACHING PORTFOLIO

Ding

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Teaching Statement

When I was first packing to move to a city only an hour's drive away from the U.S.-Mexico border, I did not expect teaching to be as personal and fulfilling a part of graduate school as it has become for me. Many of our students are as bright as they are underprepared by the public education system in Arizona. Many grew up terrified and traumatized by border politics. Many juggle parenting, family, work, and school all at once. Many have recently been or are currently deployed overseas. Many are returning to school to complete the education of their dreams years and sometimes decades later—I still think about a student from my class on American gender equality law last year, who grew up with the movement to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970s, was discouraged from going to college as a young woman, and simply could not get enough of talking with me about the course.

I feel a deep and instant rapport with the students I teach because I see myself reflected in them, each in their own ways. This helps me to meet them where they are, both academically and personally; it is an opportunity as well as a responsibility. When I sit down to prepare course materials, my mind often jumps back to my own experiences taking classes as a then-closeted queer trans woman of color who was terrified to speak in class and struggled with reading and writing in a second language. I want to offer my students the kind of teaching and support that would have helped me succeed in a class like ours. Depending on the course and the students, it can mean trusting students to show them that they can trust me back, adjusting the physical setup and lighting of the classroom to make them feel more like equal contributors rather than passive spectators, revealing implicit disciplinary norms and assumptions, leaving room for creative, artistic, and colloquial forms of engagement, doing small group discussions and in-class activities, designing reading guides and course lexicon assignments, being open about my own uncertainty and puzzlement about the texts, working through difficult arguments and passages together in class, modeling critical discussions and disagreements, scaffolding and sequencing writing projects, and too often, just caring about students as human beings who belong, hearing what they are saying, and taking their experiences and ideas seriously.

I like to quip with my students that what I do in the classroom is a lot like “crowd work” in stand-up comedy. Approaching teaching as an aspiring stand-up comedian makes my classes come alive in ways I find intuitive, if not second nature: I am constantly reading the room, assessing understanding and uptake, and getting ready to check in and adjust on the fly. I understand that the points I make may not always land, but that I can turn them into useful teaching moments for the class as well. I welcome rather than resist unexpected questions, responses, and comments from students. I take myself to be adding to my students’ contributions, not speaking over them. And while I enjoy teaching as a collaborative, open-ended endeavor, I am always prepared for those few days of the semester when students just feel like quietly watching and enjoying the show—I find it refreshing to switch gears every once in a while too.

Here is a concrete example. This semester, I am teaching a new General Education class, Sex, Gender, and Love: An Introduction to Social Philosophy, which just became part of our curriculum in January. I had spent over a year designing it and shepherding it through the university’s course approval process. In developing this course, my primary goal has been to introduce the critical

study of our social world to marginalized students who may not otherwise find themselves in a humanities class. And it worked: over 80% of the students enrolled are gender, sexuality, and/or racial minorities, and the course filled up so fast that I ended up agreeing to raise the enrollment cap by twenty students in exchange for a grader. Keeping in mind that this is the first semester of college for most of the class, I decided to ask students to read for our first day a short, witty essay by Greta Christina, “Are We Having Sex Now or What?” The gist of Christina’s discussion is that even though she had always assumed that what counted as sex was self-evident, her view was shattered into pieces when she began to have sex with women. The essay offered a quick “hook” for the course as Christina framed her argument around the difficulty of keeping count of the number of her partners, which my students found both hilarious and relevant. There were five things I wanted the class to get out of our discussion that day: First, when we see statements like “sex is just obviously ...” or “sex is defined as ...,” we should not take them for granted but instead interrogate “obvious to whom?” and “defined by whom?” Second, conceptual questions like “what counts as sex?” not only shape our everyday lives but have a politics to them; in particular, ill-fitting definitions have the power of rendering invisible the lived experiences of marginalized communities. Third, it is useful to theorize “from margin to center”; here, thinking about what sex is to queer women illuminates what sex is to straight women, but not vice versa. Fourth, a humanities class is not merely “opinions”; we can make a case for and against a view with evidence and arguments. Finally, and most importantly, my students got a hearty first taste of the power and fun in learning to think critically and reflectively for themselves.

To drive these points home, I invited the class to see for ourselves just how messy—and how risky—the business of trying to define sex is. “Isn’t it awfully obvious what sex is?” I provoked my students. Several hands went right up. “Can you not have sex without, you know, having sex with a guy?” one student asked. Sensing her hesitation to use certain terms in front of a classroom full of strangers, I proceeded to show rather than tell the class that they can all feel safe discussing topics like this. “Yes, and there’s a special philosophical term for that. Are you all ready for it?” My stand-up comedian instinct kicked in as I wrote down “PIVI [pee-vee]: penis-in-vagina intercourse” on the white board. “If sex were PIVI, then, indeed, a lot of lesbians would turn out to be ‘virgins,’ which I know may be news to at least some of you.” The whole class erupted in laughter. I then seized the moment to make explicit the broader issue of starting points in social and political theory. Students were intrigued. “What’s the point of defining sex then? Why can’t you just say that you are having sex whenever you feel like you are having sex?” wondered one. “Well, what if you think you are having sex with somebody who doesn’t think they are having sex with you?” answered another student, who recalled the worry raised by the reading. This was when I stepped in, using the opportunity to redirect everybody to the text. By the end of class, over twenty students had contributed to our discussion. “This was not what I expected, but I’m really into it,” a student told me just as I was getting surrounded by a long line of students who still had more and more to say.

It is an incredible feeling to see the lightbulb over a student’s head switch on in front of you, to see them practically glued to the exhilarating world of ideas they just wandered into, to see them find their own voice for the first time. “If I seem a bit happier than usual,” a trans woman who came out during my feminist theory class last year wrote to me back then, “I think you will know why.” That is how I feel about my students as well.

Teaching Experience

At the University of Arizona, I have been the instructor of record for eleven classes, including six regular semester-long and five accelerated summer/winter classes, at all levels of the undergraduate curriculum. For my teaching, I have received the Philosophy Department's Julia Annas Graduate Teaching Award, given annually to one to two students on a competitive basis by a vote of the faculty.

I. INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD (REGULAR SEMESTERS, SIX CLASSES)

Regular semesters are 17 weeks at the University of Arizona; classes meet for 75 minutes twice a week or 50 minutes three times a week.

1. Phil 130 – Sex, Gender, and Love: An Introduction to Social Philosophy (Fall 2024, 67 students, with a grader; this is the first offering of a new course I developed for the university's refreshed General Education curriculum)
2. Phil/GWS 330 – Feminist Philosophy (Spring 2024, 18 students)
3. Phil/GWS 330 – Feminist Philosophy (Spring 2023, 36 students)
4. Phil 213 – Logic in Law (Fall 2022, 14 students)
5. Phil 213 – Logic in Law (Spring 2022, 10 students)
6. Phil 321 – Medical Ethics (Fall 2021, 54 students)

II. INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD (SUMMER/WINTER SESSIONS, FIVE CLASSES, ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE)

Select courses from the department are offered online in accelerated 5- and 7-week formats during summer and winter recess. They attract many nontraditional students.

7. Phil/Pol 324 – Law and Morality (Winter 2023, 5-week session, 41 students)
8. Phil/Pol 324 – Law and Morality (Summer 2023, second 7-week session, 23 students)
9. Phil/Pol 324 – Law and Morality (Summer 2021, second 5-week session, 14 students)
10. Phil/Pol 324 – Law and Morality (Summer 2021, first 5-week session, 38 students)
11. Phil/Pol 324 – Law and Morality (Summer 2020, second 5-week session, 13 students)

III. GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT (FOUR CLASSES)

For Phil 150B1 and 150C1, I also taught three weekly 50-minute discussion/recitation sections.

12. Phil 213 – Contemporary Moral Problems (Fall 2023, 94 students, Michael McKenna, with full responsibility for designing and teaching a week-long guest module on sexism)
13. Phil 150B1 – Personal Morality (Spring 2021, 81 students, Carolina Sartorio, Zoom)
14. Phil 150C1 – Freedom, Equality, and Authority (Fall 2020, 71 students, Tom Christiano, Zoom)
15. Phil 160D2 – Mind, Matter, and God (Fall 2019, 153 students, Chris Maloney, with another graduate student)

Faculty Evaluations

At the UA Department of Philosophy, faculty on the GTA Advisory Committee periodically visits classes taught by graduate students and provides written evaluations, including both a numerical score and a narrative assessment.

Demonstration of exemplary teaching skills will be assessed by the GTA-Advisory Committee's evaluation of each GTA's teaching of courses s/he teaches throughout his/her time at UA. The Committee's evaluator will assign to the evaluated GTA a numerical score ranging from the optimal rating of "4" (which indicates excellence) and descending to an unacceptable rating of "1" (which indicates poor performance). The numerical score serves overall to address the following four pedagogical elements:

How well does the GTA:

- A. Present material to students in a clear, engaging, and accessible manner?
- B. Respond cogently and helpfully to students' questions and comments?
- C. Run class in an organized, efficient manner?
- D. Exhibit excellent classroom management?

The ideal or target score is 4. It indicates excellence in each of elements A through D above. An acceptable score of 3 indicates adequacy in at least three of elements A through D but signals that the GTA is not excellent on all four elements. An unacceptable score of 2 indicates adequacy in one or two of elements A through D while signaling significant shortcomings in the other elements. An unacceptable score of 1 indicates significant shortcomings in all of the areas.

All three of the written evaluations I have received on my role as the instructor of record are reproduced completely and directly here, in reverse chronological order.

- Visit to Phil 330: Feminist Philosophy, Professor Guido Pincione, February 5, 2024 (pp. 6–7)
- Visit to Phil 203: Logic in Law, Professor Thony Gillies, November 28, 2022 (pp. 8–9)
- Visit to Phil 321: Medical Ethics, Professor Sara Aronowitz, November 8, 2021 (pp. 10–11)

Philosophy Department GTA Advisory Committee GTA Evaluation Form
Adopted: Fall 2018

Name of Evaluated GTA: Ding

Course Evaluated: Feminist Philosophy (PHIL 330)

Date of Evaluation: February 5, 2024

Name of Faculty Evaluator: Guido Pincione

Part 1 Overall Numerical Score			
Enter 'x' in the Cell Below the Assigned Score			
Unacceptable	Unacceptable: Partly Adequate	Acceptable: Mostly Adequate	Ideal
1	2	3	4
			X

Part 2 Narrative Evaluation:

Just before the start of the lecture, Ding and the students moved the seats and tables to form a long table around which she and the eight students took seats. I think this helped create the climate for the kind of conversation she was looking for. She circulated a clear and well-organized handout on the alleged distinction between the personal and the political. After brief opening comments, she invited students to propose an interpretation of the claim that the personal is political. Several students offered interesting answers.

Ding then asked two students to read aloud passages from the readings for the day. Those passages apparently consisted of interviews, or dialogues, on sexual experiences and love (or lack thereof), as well as comparisons between the freedom experienced by men and women in such relationships.

At Ding's request, students then grouped up in discussion pairs. They were expected to discuss questions contained in the handout. They seemed engaged in those discussions. She joined each of those groups for a few minutes and participated in the discussion.

Next, Ding addressed the class with reflections on the questions that had just been discussed. She emphasized the normative importance of recognizing the political dimension of experiences traditionally seen as personal, as well as the asymmetry between men and women regarding the experiences described in the passages read by the students.

Ding did a great job of explaining the philosophical and political issues raised by experiences commonly seen as personal. She also highlighted the clarificatory role of philosophy, a role that she illustrated with the concepts of sexual harassment and

Philosophy Department GTA Advisory Committee GTA Evaluation Form
Adopted: Fall 2018

oppression. Some students offered their own reflections, and all seemed interested in the philosophical problems that Ding brought to the surface.

By placing the philosophical discussion after the reading of a dialog about “personal” experiences, Ding roused the students’ interest in the philosophical subtleties that surround the distinction between the personal and the political. She clearly held the attention of the students throughout the class period. Her clear and thought-provoking comments, as well as her ability to spark philosophical reflection on experiences described in passages commonly seen as non-philosophical, helped students focus on well-defined problems. All in all, this was an excellent lecture.

Philosophy Department GTA Advisory Committee GTA Evaluation Form
Adopted: Fall 2018

Name of Evaluated GTA: Ding

Course Evaluated: Phil 203

Date of Evaluation: 11.28.22

Name of Faculty Evaluator: Thony Gillies

Part 1 Overall Numerical Score			
Enter 'x' in the Cell Below the Assigned Score			
Unacceptable	Unacceptable: Partly Adequate	Acceptable: Mostly Adequate	Ideal
1	2	3	4
			x

Part 2 Narrative Evaluation:

ding class visit

Phil 203: Logic in law. 11/28/22: discussion about the recent *Dobbs* Supreme Court decision

Great rapport with students — easy chatting before class, but then the students quickly focused when she began.

Extensive four page handout to guide discussion.

Implied fundamental rights: strict scrutiny test - asserts compelling state interest - narrowly tailored Ding did a nice job interweaving the factual content of the discussion with the logical structure of the arguments in decisions.

Ding contrasts strict scrutiny with “rational basis review” and intermediate scrutiny.

Students were engaged and Ding did a good job taking questions and guiding discussion.

Student questions and comments were mostly on topic and when they weren’t Ding nudged them to the nearest coherent version.

Ding presented a stylized version of the structure of the argument in the *Dobbs* decision.

Students are *not* happy with *Dobbs*! But Ding does a good job acknowledging that the decision reads a lot differently from other decisions previously discussed and gets the discussion back to thinking about the structure of the majority opinion and how the dissenting opinion engages it.

Philosophy Department GTA Advisory Committee GTA Evaluation Form
Adopted: Fall 2018

Name of Evaluated GTA: Ding

Course Evaluated: Biomedical Ethics

Date of Evaluation: 11/18

Name of Faculty Evaluator: Sara Aronowitz

Part 1 Overall Numerical Score			
Enter 'x' in the Cell Below the Assigned Score			
Unacceptable	Unacceptable: Partly Adequate	Acceptable: Mostly Adequate	Ideal
1	2	3	4
			x

Part 2 Narrative Evaluation:

On the day I visited, Ding was teaching an article on the ethics of requiring a psychological evaluation in order for transgender patients to receive hormone replacement therapy and gender confirming surgeries. They used a combination of lecture, question and answer, and pair discussion in this session. They also provided a handout and used the board for both structuring the lecture and keeping track of student ideas.

Overall, I was extremely impressed with Ding's teaching. Their handout was incredibly detailed, but not overwhelming, and presented three arguments in premise-conclusion form which served to structure the discussion. The tone of their lectures was friendly but informative – though at times they seemed a little nervous. The students were quite engaged, and participated actively in answering questions and in the pair activities. I did notice that Ding often moved on very quickly from a student's point: I would suggest in future to let things breath a little more, and especially to allow students to engage with each other, in addition to replying to the professor.

I would also suggest a brief recap at the end of each lecture, and to ask students to redefine concepts from earlier in the semester, rather than Ding themselves doing all the work for them to define terms. I did have the sense that many of the students might not have been following all of the arguments, so going a bit slower might be useful.

In terms of content, Ding has made the course their own by going beyond the staples of bioethics: organ donation, abortion etc, and including topics like the one I sat in on, psychological consultation as gatekeeping. They are also organizing peer review of the final papers, and in class activities: overall the assignment design was creative and promising,

Philosophy Department GTA Advisory Committee GTA Evaluation Form
Adopted: Fall 2018

though perhaps a little more complicated than strictly necessary. This is Ding's first semester as lead instructor, and I'm pleased to see so much experimentation: it bodes well for the future.

Student Evaluations

I. QUANTITATIVE EVALUATIONS

The following tables summarize the quantitative feedback I have received from students on my role as the instructor of record, in reverse chronological order. I have selected the two measures that most directly indicate overall teaching effectiveness; full reports are available upon request.¹

All scores are on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).

This course expanded my knowledge and skills in this subject matter.

Course	Semester	Enrollment	Total Responses	Median	Mean
Feminist Philosophy	Spring 2024	18	8 (44%)	5.0	4.8
Law & Morality	Winter 2023	41	16 (39%)	5.0	4.7
Feminist Philosophy	Spring 2023	36	17 (47%)	5.0	4.3
Logic in Law	Fall 2022	14	11 (79%)	5.0	4.9
Logic in Law	Spring 2022	10	8 (80%)	5.0	4.1
Medical Ethics	Fall 2021	54	27 (50%)	5.0	4.3
Law & Morality	Summer 2021	38	19 (50%)	5.0	4.7

This course helped me to connect the concepts and skills we learned to the world around me.

Course	Semester	Enrollment	Total Responses	Median	Mean
Feminist Philosophy	Spring 2024	18	8 (44%)	5.0	4.8
Law & Morality	Winter 2023	41	16 (39%)	5.0	4.5
Feminist Philosophy	Spring 2023	36	17 (47%)	5.0	4.3
Logic in Law	Fall 2022	14	11 (79%)	5.0	4.8
Logic in Law	Spring 2022	10	8 (80%)	5.0	4.4
Medical Ethics	Fall 2021	54	27 (50%)	5.0	4.2
Law & Morality	Summer 2021	38	19 (50%)	5.0	4.8

1. Student participate in course evaluations on a voluntary basis at the University of Arizona; the tables here report statistics for classes with six or more responses. To encourage participation, I use a variety of strategies such as explaining to students that their feedback matters to me and would inform and shape the way I teach the class in the future, sending out two or three email reminders with a direct link to the survey, and making sure to clarify that the results would not be released to me until after I submit the final grades.

II. QUALITATIVE EVALUATIONS

The following is a *complete*, verbatim reproduction of the written comments I have received teaching three courses of varying sizes, levels, and formats:

- Feminist Philosophy (pp. 13–14) is a small-to-medium-sized, upper-division General Education course featuring a combination of lectures and discussions;
- Logic in Law (pp. 14–16) is a small, lower-division seminar enrolling primarily students in philosophy, political science, and pre-law; and
- Law and Morality (pp. 16–18) is a fairly large, upper-division General Education course offered in an accelerated, asynchronous online format, with many nontraditional students attending.

FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY (18 STUDENTS, UPPER-DIVISION, GEN ED, IN-PERSON, SPRING 2024)

What did you especially like about this course?

- Ding, was very open, and interesting to listen to, she encouraged us to do things on our own and gave us time and space to work.
- I gained so much from this course from the material we went over, to our class discussions, and the projects. This class expanded my understanding of myself and the world around me.
- I liked how the weekly readings were discussed in the class immediately afterThe discussions were most often productive and helpful.
- I liked that we were encouraged to speak freely and openly.
- I liked the course content (the readings, etc.) and the in-class discussions about the readings (this was really helpful since the readings themselves could get confusing, and the discussions were great in clarifying them).
- I really liked how discussion based the class was and how we were encouraged to really engage with and critique certain ideas. It was really interesting to hear everyone's different ideas and perspectives.
- I really liked the readings and I enjoyed the conversations I was able to attend!
- The readings, they were filled with so many different perspectives, it was enjoyable.

What suggestions would you make to improve this course?

- I can't think of anything.
- I was under the impression at the start of this semester that the course was going to be mainly a discussion based one, where the students were encouraged (with Ding's help) to talk with each other about the content. However, I felt the class operated more like a lecture, with Ding doing 90% of the speaking and the students just listening.
- I would suggest moving through the history and background stuff a little quicker. The first half of the semester was much less interesting and engaging to me and I think getting to the “meat” of it with the actual philosophy quicker would be better. Also I would suggest including more in class activities.
- I would want more opportunity to work this material through projects.
- maybe the college allows for a classroom with tables where it's easier to collaborate and also maybe more in-between assignments to help with the readings.
- Nothing I think its a great course, and I have no criticism.

- Perhaps more interactive conversation within the classroom.
- Sometimes, Ding waiting for a response when people aren't sure what to say would result in, for lack of a better phrase, an awkward silence. This is not Ding's fault at all, but I would focus on rephrasing questions or asking what is confusing people rather than just waiting.

Please write any additional comments you may have below.

- Ding is an amazing and accommodating instructor who uses their wide knowledge of philosophical thought and issues to encourage their students to come to their own conclusions. They are what a philosophy professor should strive for.
- Ding thank you so much for being so accommodating to me and understanding with everything that happened to me this semester I appreciate it!
- I don't have any comments right now.
- N/A
- Overall this class was really interesting, but you could tell that it was early on in its existence. I think Ding and this class both have a lot of potential.
- Thank you for such a great course!
- Very open environment felt like it was easy to talk
- [No response: one student]

LOGIC IN LAW (14 STUDENTS, LOWER-DIVISION, SEMINAR, IN-PERSON, FALL 2022)

What did you especially like about this course?

- Ding did a fantastic job of distilling the material in a way that made the concepts comprehensible while showing how they apply in practice. The classroom environment fostered conversations that broadened my perspective and understanding.
- Ding's perspective and humor.
- Everything, the teacher really made this course what it is. They would force us to ask ourselves difficult arguments about Court cases and taught us how to formulate an argument back. I was not expecting this class to be so involved and I never expected to be a literate with law as I am now. It is kind of a difficult class and there are a lot of readings but overall it has been a very interesting/engaging class.
- having the opportunity to speak
- I enjoy the openness of the class. The instructor allows other opinions to be voiced and is helpful in gaining an understanding of the content.
- I liked that it was discussion based which helped better understand different viewpoints.
- I liked the genera and discussion opportunities
- I loved this course, it has been one of my favorite classes. I enjoyed the discussions we were able to have, and the way that Ding presented the information in a clear and helpful way.
- I personally liked how passionate the instructor is about the topics being taught.
- In class discussion
- The professor, as well as investigating the inner workings of the Supreme Court and its numerous flaws.

What suggestions would you make to improve this course?

- I did not have any issues and do not see any immediate need for improvement.
- I think the class periods should have been longer.
- I would enjoy more example papers regarding the moral issues discussed.
- I would greatly appreciate a powerpoint presentation! I am a visual learner and learn better when taking my own notes off of a powerpoint.
- I would suggest reducing the amount of topics which would make it easier to fully comprehend each one.
- making it possible to receive all participation points from online discussions rather than in class.
- Nothing, she is great.
- Possibly make it an upper division, the professor really knows their stuff and I feel like if we could have longer class discussions it would make the course even better. (Our class discussions are already great but I feel like that would make it better.) Additionally I like the idea of being assigned a side of an argument with a group of people and trying to argue against the other group of people in class. (Almost like we are lawyers in court.) I feel like it would bring more camaraderie.
- Spend more energy on laying the groundwork at the beginning of the semester. Students need to have a strong grasp of the 14th amendment, constitutional tests, and general supreme court conduct.
- The only suggestion I really have is I would have loved if the class was longer. 50 minutes just felt way too short.
- The teacher only approaches topics from a liberal perspective and can easily become short tempered and snappy when a student asks questions they dont like.

Please write any additional comments you may have below.

- Grading was a bit too harsh for a 200-level course.
- I am really grateful for this teacher's flexibility/kindness. They definitely grade hard but have an reason for doing so (it's still scary though). Because they provide office hours so often I never feel bad about asking "dumb" questions which helps me learn more. Also I think it would be fun to have class outside and really switch things up.
- I really enjoyed learning about this fascinating topic! Ding is very knowledgeable on the topic, and has been understandable and supportive throughout.
- I really enjoyed learning and integrating my own knowledge with this new philosophical and legal approach to writing and thinking.
- I very much enjoyed the course.
- It was difficult to feel as though your thoughts were supported unless they were in line with the teachers ideals. My teacher snapped at me when I asked if she could explain their comments on my first essay.
- N/A
- None [two students]
- Once again, I truly enjoyed this class. I learned so much and I loved Ding's style of teaching.

- The topics were extremely interesting.

Given the uncertainties of the pandemic situation, what factors supported or hindered your learning in this course?

- All the lecture materials were uploaded on d2l for those who were out sick, which was very helpful.
- Ding was very flexible and this gave me the opportunity to present my best work.
- During the stressful times endured, the instructor was very accommodating of all my needs and made the course enjoyable and engaging when it was actually stressful for me in my personal life.
- N/A [two students]
- NA [two students]
- None [two students]
- Since the class met three days a week, I had to miss a class or two if I felt sick (in case I had COVID to reduce the spread). However, Ding was very understandable if I had to miss class, and I never felt like I was falling too far behind in the material.
- The professor was not strict on attendance which meant anyone who was feeling sick could stay home.

LAW AND MORALITY (41 STUDENTS, UPPER-DIVISION, GEN ED, ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE, WINTER 2023)

What did you especially like about this course?

- Assignments helped me learn the material
- Content is intriguing and deadlines were clear. Ding is extremely nice and responsive. She cares for her students and allows multiple attempts to get things right and learn.
- ease of navigation
- How quickly the teacher responded to emails
- I especially liked the subject matter of this class.
- I thought the lectures were very helpful and very much aided in understanding concepts that were buried in the reading.
- Na
- Prof. Ding has been extremely organized, the goals and what were expected of us have been made very clear, and she was always available to discuss over ZOOM, even during the holiday season. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for all the efforts that went into organizing, grading and communicating with the students.
- The learning material and assignments are a reflection of the way the teacher genuinely cares about their students. I personally love the reading guides, I hate reading so much, but the reading guides made it easy to stay engaged. This is the first time I have a reading guide.
- The readings were very thought-provoking and fun to read.
- The subject material was interesting and the instruction was very helpful
- The subject matter in this course was relevant and had real-world application. I found myself eager to engage in conversations with others outside of class following the readings and truly see this course as foundational in my educational and career pursuits.

- The topics were very interesting, I just wish I had more time to truly understand and process it all. The way the class is structured is nice but it is a LOT of concepts for such a short amount of time that I felt like I had to pick certain things to focus on because there was absolutely no way to fully understand and learn everything in this timeframe.
- The way the course was delivered.
- Very kind professor and interesting subject matter/
- [No response: one student]

What suggestions would you make to improve this course?

- 3 weeks is not enough time for this course. I felt extremely rushed and it felt like I could not submit as quality of work as I would like because I was so focused on just getting it done in time.
- Different course website
- Given the importance of the material, I do believe some form of synchronous group dialogue would be beneficial, even on an “optional,” or “extra-credit” basis. I understand that may be difficult to do in a time-constrained winter session, but I think students would benefit from this.
- I think the course and material are fair enough and straightforward, the teacher answers quickly to emails and seems eager to help students do their best.
- Instead of making this course so reading and “fill in the blank orientated” Invite discussion and thought sharing. This is a class that very much incorporates contemporary/potentially controversial subjects, so to openly discuss and perhaps have some guided discussion would have added some interesting perspectives.
- It was very confusing and difficult to get started in this course.
- It would be helpful to explain, elaborate, and/or discuss what is in the handouts instead of just reading it verbatim out loud in the lectures. In other words, viewpoint, perspective. Adding in other activities instead of just reading to complete reading guides might add variety.
- n/a [two students]
- Na
- nothing it was perfect
- The non-D2L website this course uses needs to go. It is incredibly difficult to navigate compared to D2L, half the documents I opened were in computer code. 30 to 56 questions for each of the 12 reading guides is a little much for a 3-week course. Half the time, I finish the readings and lectures feeling like I learned something and understood and do well on the exams. Others, I end up with a 40%, confused, and even my next answer choice is incorrect.
- There is a huge gap in the requirements to get an A vs a B in the course. As a person who is aiming to receive an A, I am committed to doubling, if not more, the amount of work a person aiming to get a B has to put in. I feel this is unfair to students wishing to receive a better grade. I also think the grading system could be fixed. I think a point system would be much more beneficial than the check/check plus system in place. Apart from the already extremely more demanding standards to-
- [No response: three students]

Please write any additional comments you may have below.

- get an A vs a B: a person must receive an A on every single assignment and quiz in order to receive an A in the course according to the syllabus. I've never had a class this demanding before and feel that I didn't absorb all of the material because I was exhausted on getting all points and meeting all the requirements.
- Ding is clearly well-educated in this arena and has a lot of information to share. I am glad I was able to learn so much in an abbreviated/accelerated amount of time.
- Great class and awesome instructor.
- great class, even better teacher
- I found the course website (GitHub) a little confusing. I feel like it's just because I'm so used to only using D2L. Although deadlines were very clearly outlined on D2L and the course schedule so it wasn't a major issue.
- I loved this class for the way that it was presented, the work/assignments, reading guides, videos, and everything that was designed to make the student very successful.
- I truly appreciate Professor Ding's lecture style and formatting in this class. Professor Ding clarified more difficult concepts, and provided context that was relevant to the course and beyond. This was the first class I have taken where I truly wanted to engage with the material more and felt impacted by the information presented to me. I also appreciate Professor Ding's feedback on the assignments and encouragement along the way. Thank you!
- n/a
- Na
- Professor Ding was amazing and very supportive. They helped re establish confidence that I lost very early on and I am very appreciative of that.
- Some quiz questions are convoluted or confusing, making you 2nd guess answers that were correct or throwing you off entirely. Sometimes I feel like the correct answer isn't even in the paragraphs I'm reading that it's asking about.
- The professor graded things timely and quickly provided feedback on assignments as well as answered questions in a prompt manner.
- This was absolutely a great course, studying law from a philosophical stance. However, I don't think it should be done as a 3-week course. There is just so much to learn and 3 weeks are not sufficient.
- [No response: three students]

Unsolicited Student Notes

Over the years, I have also received numerous unsolicited notes from students expressing their appreciation. The following are some examples, with personal information redacted.

P.S. Thank you Ding for a very enlightening, somewhat saddening, broadening of my own world view on the many different topics discussed in this class. It has really opened my eyes up to struggles that I have ^{7 of 7} either discounted or not even known existed.

Transcription: P.S. Thank you Ding for a very enlightening, somewhat saddening, broadening of my own world view on the many different topics discussed in this class. It has really opened my eyes up to struggles that I have either discounted or not even known existed.

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: [REDACTED] Former Feminist Philosophy Student - [REDACTED]
Date: September 2, 2024 at 1:32PM
To: din@arizona.edu

External Email

Hi again Ding!

I hope you are doing well! I am not sure if you remember me but my name is [REDACTED] and I was a former student of yours in 2023. I took your Feminist Philosophy class senior year and to this day maintain that it was my favorite college course. I submitted a website for my final project to solve the question [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and attempted to connect the text we analyzed in class with my independent research. This course was truly the most fascinating and thought-provoking class I took while at the University of Arizona. As a teacher, I feel you genuinely push your students to think critically and formulate sound arguments in terms of their pre-existing beliefs. I consistently looked forward to your class and I felt that it reignited my passion for learning again. I wanted to reach out to you today because you had commented on the review of my final project by asking if I was considering going to grad school. Funny enough, I am now applying to go to law school and I wanted to reach out and ask if you would write me a letter of recommendation. For the past year, I have been working as a clerk for the [REDACTED] Court. This experience has deepened my interest in law and I hope to apply to schools for the upcoming 2025 fall semester. Please let me know if you are in any way able to write me a letter of recommendation within the next month. I completely understand if you are busy as I know fall classes have started up. Either way, I wanted to let you know that the course you taught me had a profound impact on my desire to pursue higher education and I am very grateful to have participated in your course.

Thank you,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: Thank You!
Date: May 17, 2023 at 10:58 AM
To: Ding din@arizona.edu

Hi Ding,
I just wanted to say thank you so much for such a great class. I really enjoyed it and I learned so much. It has been one of my favorite classes that I have taken at the U of A.
Also, in your feedback for my term paper, you asked if I am planning on grad school and I just wanted to let you know that I am!
Thank you again and I hope that you have a wonderful summer!
Best,

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: Thank you
Date: May 9, 2023 at 10:25 PM
To: Ding din@arizona.edu

Hey Ding,
I wanted to thank you again for all of your help this semester. I appreciate you taking the time to sit down with me and walk me through the process of persuasive philosophical writing. I enjoyed the class and wish you the absolute best in your future endeavors,

Thanks again

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: Class Today
Date: May 3, 2023 at 8:11 AM
To: Ding din@arizona.edu

Hi Ding,
I have an appointment this afternoon and won't be able to make it to class. Thank you so much for an incredible semester - I've really enjoyed the class and feel like I'm coming away with increased awareness of a much larger range of perspectives! Thank you again for going above and beyond to keep us all safe and comfortable. I hope you have a fantastic summer!

- [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: [CATMAIL] Just wanted to say thanks
Date: April 18, 2023 at 7:13 AM
To: Ding din@arizona.edu

Hi Ding,

I hope things are going well for you. I'm sorry that I wasn't in class yesterday, [REDACTED] I can't even begin to express the sense of ease that I feel and the hope that I have for the future. I wanted to say thank you so very much for being willing to talk about trans issues in class and assigning readings related to this subject. I feel as though I have finally overcome a "hermeneutical injustice" which has plagued me for most of my life.

I'll be in class tomorrow and I won't talk about this too much, but if I seem a bit happier than usual I think you will know why.

All the best,